



CITY OF HAMILTON
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Planning Division

TO:	Chair and Members Planning Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	September 19, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	James Street North Mobility Hub Study (PED14169) (Wards 1, 2, and 3)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Wards 1, 2, and 3
PREPARED BY:	David Falletta (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1221
SUBMITTED BY:	Jason Thorne General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Report entitled “James Street North Mobility Hub Study” (attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED14169), be adopted.

- (b) That Planning staff be directed to report back on the Implementation Strategies and Phasing Recommendations contained within the James Street North Mobility Hub Study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Provincial Government has announced the development of a new GO Station at James Street North and Murray Street in Hamilton (attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED14169). This location, identified as a Mobility Hub by Metrolinx, is where the CN main line intersects with the future City of Hamilton rapid transit A-Line. The City retained a project consultant, Brook McIlroy, to study the Mobility Hub area and prepare implementation strategies to guide the planning and development of this area. The Mobility Hub area is generally bounded by Cannon Street in the south, Victoria Avenue in the east, Hamilton Harbour in the north, and Crooks Street in the west, as shown on Appendix “A” to Report PED14169.

The objectives of the study are to review the Mobility Hub and identify actions that provide guidance on:

- How to better connect the GO Station to the community;

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- Where to direct intensification;
- Key design principles that will be applied to new development;
- Priorities for public realm and streetscape improvements;
- The existing policy framework;
- Implementation strategies;
- A high level phasing plan for the Mobility Hub including phasing, priorities, and next steps.

The project consultant, together with the Community Planning Section, input from the public, the City's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), a focus group made up of stakeholder groups, neighbourhood association representatives, local business owners and local residents, and the City's Design Review Panel, conducted a comprehensive review of the James Street North Mobility Hub and identified 19 Implementation Strategies and Phasing Recommendations to guide its planning and development, which are captured in Appendix "B" to Report PED14169.

Recommendation (b) requires Planning Staff to report back on the Implementation Strategies and Phasing Recommendations contained within the James Street North Mobility Hub Study (Study), which include:

Short Term (By 2016):

1. Finalize the James Street North Mobility Hub Study;
2. Establish a Mobility Hub Communications Plan;
3. Develop a Public Works Priority List;
4. Implement Public Real Pilot Project(s);
5. Streetscape Improvements to James Street North;
6. Undertake a Downtown to Waterfront Parking Strategy;
7. Develop a Hamilton Green Standard;
8. Undertake a Strachan Street Green Corridor and Trails Connection Study;
9. Undertake Multi-Modal Transportation Impact;

Medium Term (2016-2020):

10. Official Plan and Zoning Amendments;
11. Undertake a Mobility Hub Marketing/Branding Strategy;
12. Create a Comprehensive Wayfinding Strategy;
13. Require Transportation Demand Strategies for Site Plan Approval;
14. Review and Update Existing Street Standards;
15. Establish Partnerships with Transit Providers;
16. Promote Design Excellence at the City's Urban Design and Architecture Awards;
17. Establish a Mobility Hub Programming Strategy;

Long Term (Beyond 2020):

18. Establish Partnerships between Institutions, Employers, Transit Agencies, and Local Artists; and,
19. Monitor Implementation of the Mobility Hub Study.

Staff are of the opinion that the Study (attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED14169) has comprehensively analyzed the Mobility Hub in response to the planned GO Station at James Street North and Murray Street, and provides implementation recommendations to guide its planning and development. The recommendations contained in this Report will ensure that the City appropriately responds to the new GO Station.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 15.

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: N/A
Staffing: N/A
Legal: N/A

The Study provides analysis and justification for the recommended implementation items. Recommendation (b) of this Report directs Planning Staff to report back on the implementation items, which may include financial, staffing, and legal implications. Where possible staff will identify synergies between existing work plans and the recommendations of this Report to streamline implementation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Big Move is the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) was released by Metrolinx in 2008. The RTP envisions Mobility Hubs where transportation modes, including rapid transit, local transit, specialized transit, cycling and accessible pedestrian networks come together seamlessly. They are centres of connectivity along the regional transportation network. They are planned to offer an intensive concentration of employment, residential, retail and/or recreational destinations.

In February 2011, the Metrolinx board approved the Mobility Hub Guidelines – a framework for the planning and development of Mobility Hubs. The purpose of the Mobility Hub Guidelines is to:

- Clearly communicate the Mobility Hub concept;
- Provide guidance and inspiration on developing mobility hub plans and incorporating Mobility Hub objectives into other planning activities;

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- Become a tool and resource for Metrolinx/GO Transit, municipalities, transit agencies, developers, consultants, provincial ministries, community organizations and other public agencies; and,
- Serve as a key source of direction for Metrolinx when undertaking planning efforts or when building infrastructure in Mobility Hubs, or reviewing third party plans and proposals for Mobility Hubs.

In October 2011, the City of Hamilton was advised that GO Transit was initiating a capital project to build a new GO Station at James Street North and Murray Street, and that the new GO Station will open in summer 2015. Once work is complete, the station will feature:

- A new station building;
- North and south rail platforms;
- A Kiss and Ride area;
- Approximately 300 surface parking spaces;
- Pedestrian and bicycle pathways;
- A bus loop with heated shelters; and
- The Bay Street pedestrian bridge with elevators and platform access.

In response to the new GO station planned for James Street North and Murray Street, City Planning staff initiated the James Street North Mobility Hub Study. In July of 2013, the City Planning staff retained Brook McIlroy to study the James Street North Mobility Hub and identify opportunities and actions to achieve a successful Mobility Hub.

Chronology

November 2008: *The Big Move*, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) was released by Metrolinx.

February 2011: The Metrolinx board approved the Mobility Hub Guidelines – a framework for the planning and development of Mobility Hubs.

October 2011: The City of Hamilton was advised that GO Transit was initiating a capital project to build a new GO Station at James Street North and Murray Street.

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- July 17, 2013: The City retained Brook McIlroy as the project consultant to study the James Street North Mobility Hub and identify actions to achieve a successful Mobility Hub.
- September 24, 2013: TAC meeting, hosted by City Planning staff and the project consultant, was held to gain input on the Study.
- December 4, 2013: A public consultation event, hosted by City Planning staff and the project consultant, was held to gain input on the Study.
- January 23, 2014: Focus Group meeting, hosted by City Planning staff and the project consultant, was held to gain input on the Study.
- April 3, 2014: TAC meeting, hosted by City Planning staff and the project consultant, was held to gain input on the Study.
- April 10, 2014: Focus Group meeting, hosted by City Planning staff and the project consultant, was held to gain input on the Study.
- April 22, 2014: A public consultation event, hosted by City Planning staff and the project consultant, was held to gain input on the Study.
- June 23, 2014: A public consultation event, hosted by City Planning staff and the project consultant, was held to gain input on the Study.
- June 24, 2014: A draft of the final Study was circulated TAC for review and comment.
- June 25, 2014: Focus Group meeting, hosted by City Planning staff and the project consultant, was held to gain input on the Study.
- July 17, 2014: Design Review Panel: Opportunities sites and Implementation Strategies and Phasing Recommendations presented to Design Review Panel.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Provincial, regional, and local plans, policies and guidelines provide a framework for the growth of strong communities, which includes guidance on the planning and development of mobility hubs. The following is a list of applicable Provincial, Regional and local policy documents and guidelines that apply:

Provincial Policy:

- Provincial Policy Statement (2014)
- Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006)

Regional Policy:

- The Big Move (2008)
- GO 2020 – GO Transit’s Strategic Plan (2008)
- Mobility Hub Guidelines (Metrolinx) (2011)

Municipal Policy:

- Vision 2020
- Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS)
- Urban Hamilton Official Plan (adopted in 2009, approved in 2013)
- Zoning By-Law (05-200)
- City-Wide Transportation Master Plan (2007)
- Downtown Hamilton Transportation Master Plan (2008)
- Pedestrian Master Plan (2102)
- Shifting Gears, Hamilton’s Cycling Master Plan (2009)
- Setting Sail: Secondary Plan for the West Harbour (adopted in 2005, approved in 2012)
- West Harbour Waterfront Recreation Master Plan (2010)
- West Harbour Transportation Master Plan (2005)
- Jamesville Neighbourhood Action Plan (2012)
- Beasley Action Plan (2012)
- Transit Oriented Development Guidelines for Hamilton (2010)
- Public Art Master Plan (2008)
- City-Wide Corridor Planning Principles and Design Guidelines

Section 2 of the Study (attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED14169) provides a summary of these documents and guidelines.

The Study responds to the applicable policies and guidelines respecting mobility hubs and provides implementation recommendations that are consistent with these documents.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The project team consulted with the public, a Focus Group, the City’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the City’s Design Review Panel (DRP) to gain input into the Study. Additionally, Planning staff created a project website (www.hamilton.ca/JamesSTNGO) at the beginning of the project in order to allow interested persons to access relevant information and be aware of the status of the study. The website will be updated to include the Study.

Public Consultation Events

Public consultation events, which were advertised in the Hamilton Spectator newspaper, were held as follows:

Public Information Centre #1 - Visioning Workshop (December 4, 2013): The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the project and to obtain public input to inform the vision for the study, including the vision statement, guiding principles and study area boundaries.

Public Information Centre #2 (April 22, 2014): The purpose of this meeting was to gain feedback from the public on the mobility hub boundaries, guiding principles, focus areas and opportunity sites, connections throughout the study area and implementation strategy.

Public Information Centre #3 (June 23, 2014): The purpose of this meeting was to present the draft James Street North Mobility Hub study and Implementation Strategy.

More detailed information regarding the Public Information Centres is documented in the Study report (attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED14169).

Focus Group

A Focus Group was established for the purpose of providing focused advice to the project team about the study. Additional information regarding the purpose of the Focus Group, including its role and mandate are provided in the attached Study. Invited members were meant to represent a diverse cross-section of interest and locations from the study area and included representatives from:

- The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce;
- Hamilton Hive;
- Hamilton Waterfront Trust;
- Beasley Neighbourhood Association;
- Central Neighbourhood Association;
- North End Neighbours;
- Strathcona Community Council;
- Jamesville Community Development Team;
- Hamilton Halton Home Builders’ Association;
- Local Business Owner; and,
- Local Resident.

The following Focus Group meetings were held for the study:

Focus Group Meeting #1 (January 23, 2014): The purpose of this meeting was to learn about the Mobility Hub Study, review the information obtained from the public to date

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and to provide input into the Study based on their particular association or groups perspective.

Focus Group Meeting #2 (April 10, 2014): The purpose of this meeting was to review and provide comments on the Mobility Hub draft Strategies.

Focus Group Meeting #3 (June 25, 2014): The purpose of this meeting was to review the draft Mobility Hub Study Report and review the opportunity sites and Implementation Strategies and Phasing Recommendations.

A more detailed summary of the Focus Group meetings can be found in the appendix to the Study report (attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED14169).

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

TAC is comprised of representatives from various divisions and departments of the City of Hamilton, which include:

- Planning and Economic Development Department:
 - Building Services Division
 - Downtown and Community Renewal Division
 - Growth Management Division
 - Parking and By-law Services Division
 - Planning Division
 - Strategic Services/Special Projects Division
- Community and Emergency Services Department:
 - Housing Services Division
 - Recreation Division
 - Emergency Services Division
- Healthy Living Division, Public Health Services Department
- Public Works Department
 - Environment and Sustainable Infrastructure Division
 - Transportation, Energy & Facilities Division
 - Operations and Waste Management Division
 - Landscape Architectural Services
 - Hamilton Street Railway, Transportation Division

In order to gain input into the Study, TAC meetings were held on:

- September 24, 2013;
- April 29, 2014; and,
- June 24, 2014.

Also, a draft of the final Study was circulated for TAC's review and comment on June 24, 2014. A summary of each of the TAC meetings is included in the Study report (attached as Appendix "B" to Report PED14169).

Design Review Panel (DRP)

A draft of the final Study was presented to DRP on July 17, 2014 for review and comment. Generally there was support for opportunity sites, key directions and recommendations presented to the review panel, and in particular there was positive feedback on Strachan Street green corridor and trail. Some members of DRP inquired about the opportunity for increased heights around the GO Station and easterly towards Ferguson Street. The comments from the DRP are outlined in the Study report (attached as Appendix "B" to Report PED14169).

Other Consultation

In addition to the above noted consultation groups and events, City Planning staff attended a Central Neighbourhood Association Board meeting on November 21, 2013 and a Central Neighbourhood Park Event on May 31, 2014, to provide information and gain input into the Study. Also, a draft of the final study was circulated to Metrolinx for review and comment on June 24, 2014. Input gained from these meetings and groups has been captured in the attached Study (refer to Appendix "B" to Report PED14169).

Within the Mobility Hub Study area, two other City initiated studies that are taking place concurrently include the Barton-Tiffany Urban Design Study and the Barton Street/ Kenilworth Avenue Commercial Corridor Study. Due to the overlapping study areas, Planning staff coordinated joint public consultation events with both studies. The first Public Information Centre for the James Street North Mobility Hub Study was a joint event with the Barton-Tiffany Urban Design Study and the Barton Street/ Kenilworth Avenue Commercial Corridor Study. The third Public Information Centres were joint events with the Barton-Tiffany Urban Design Study.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

As noted earlier (see Policy Implication and Legislated Requirements Section), there are a number of Provincial, Regional and local policies and guidelines that provide guidance on the planning and development of mobility hubs. The overall aim of this policy framework is to create a system of connected mobility hubs that is easily accessible, supports high density development, and is user friendly for travellers. This policy framework is reinforced by the *Mobility Hub Guidelines for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area* (Mobility Hub Guidelines), whose purpose is to:

- 1. Clearly communicate the mobility hub concept including objectives, characteristics, and the role of hubs in the region.*

2. *Provide guidance and inspiration on developing mobility hub plans and incorporating mobility hub objectives into other planning activities (e.g., official plans, secondary plans, station plans and environmental assessments).*
3. *Become a tool and resource for Metrolinx/GO Transit, municipalities, transit agencies, developers, consultants, provincial ministries, community organizations and other public agencies.*
4. *Serve as a key source of direction for Metrolinx when undertaking planning efforts, building or funding infrastructure in mobility hubs, or reviewing third party plans and proposals for mobility hubs.*

The Mobility Hub Guidelines indicated that the challenge of a mobility hub is to overcome the “*tension between the transportation function – the need for quick and efficient movement – and the placemaking function – the elements that make the hub a desirable and interesting destination, rather than just a node to pass through*”. The Mobility Hub Guidelines provide a number of guidelines organized under the three categories of: seamless mobility, placemaking and successful implementation, which provide direction on how to achieve a mobility hub that functions successfully.

The Study responds to the applicable policies and guidelines respecting mobility hubs and input obtained from the consultation events and groups identified above (see Relevant Consultation section) and provides direction on seamless mobility, placemaking and successful implementation.

The following is a summary of the Implementation Strategies and Phasing Recommendations:

Short Term (By 2016):

1. Finalize the James Street North Mobility Hub Study (Underway): To provide a vision for the build out of the Mobility Hub.
2. Establish a Mobility Hub Communications Plan: This includes creating a website that is available to the public to provide updates on the development of the Mobility Hub.
3. Develop a Project Priority List: Outline top public improvement projects to provide the City with a clear path for investment. There should also be a series of “quick wins” which can be achieved early to act as a catalyst for new development.

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4. Implement Public Realm Pilot Project(s): The City should select and fund an item from the Project Priority List, ideally one or two quick wins to show change and spark private investment in the area.
5. Streetscape Improvements to James Street North: Streetscape changes should occur along James Street North between Cannon Street and the James North GO Station.
6. Undertake a Downtown to Waterfront Parking Strategy: To relieve the current and future parking pressures in the area, a parking strategy will ensure that parking policies support appropriate and sustainable development.
7. Develop a Hamilton Green Standard: The City should create a set of performance measures with supporting guidelines related to sustainable site and building design for new development within the Mobility Hub.
8. Undertake a Strachan Street Green Corridor and Trails Connection Study: The study should lead to a finalized design for the Green Corridor (multi-use trail) and also include a Recreation Feasibility Study.
9. Undertake Multi-Modal Transportation Impact Assessment: The assessment should determine the long term impacts on all modes of transportation within the Mobility Hub and identify requirements for future upgrades and improvements in the area.
10. Official Plan and Zoning Amendments: Recommended that City Staff amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law to implement the built form and design recommendations of this Study. These amendments should permit interim uses and conversions of existing buildings.

Medium-Term (2016-2020):

11. Undertake Mobility Hub Marketing/ Branding Strategy: Branding the hub will encourage residents to identify with, and get excited about the long-term vision.
12. Create a Comprehensive Wayfinding Strategy: The focus of the strategy is to facilitate seamless integration between all modes of transportation.

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13. Require Transportation Demand Strategies for Site Plan Approval: Transportation Demand Strategies for larger development applications should be required at the site plan stage.
14. Review and Update Existing Street Standards: Existing street standards should be updated to reflect the prominence of the Mobility Hub as a result of planned future development.
15. Establish Partnerships with Transit Providers: The City should work with transit providers to coordinate schedules with each other and major local employers to ensure efficient and seamless travel.
16. Promote Design Excellence at the City's Urban Design and Architecture Awards.
17. Establish a Mobility Hub Programming Strategy: The Programming Strategy will identify specific events, festivals, and programming elements that will be taking place within the Mobility Hub.

Long-Term (Beyond 2020):

18. Establish Partnerships between Institutions, Employers, Transit Agencies and Local Artists: A successful Mobility Hub requires cooperation of a variety of parties to ensure the vision and objectives are supported.
19. Monitor Implementation of the Mobility Hub Study: The implementation of the study should be monitored to understand the success and change within the mobility hub.

Seamless Mobility

The Study has reviewed the existing and planned transportation network and has indicated that the James Street North Mobility Hub will be well connected for all modes including pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and single occupancy vehicles. As a result, the Study does not recommend any new transportation corridors, but instead recommends improvements to the existing ones. Additionally, the Study identifies a number of implementation recommendations that would ensure seamless mobility within the Mobility Hub, these include Recommendation #3, #4, #5, #6, #8, #9, #12, #14, #15, and #18.

Placemaking

As noted earlier, the policy framework directs higher density development to mobility hubs, while the Mobility Hub Guidelines provide placemaking direction intended on creating desirable and interesting destinations. The Study highlights the Ontario Ministry of Transportation's minimum density target of 37 dwelling units per hectare for mobility hubs with frequent transit service, such as the planned GO service. This minimum density target would rise to 72 dwelling units per hectare in the context of the anticipated rapid transit along James Street. Currently, there is a density of approximately 15 dwelling units per hectare within the entire mobility hub. The Study's review of the Mobility Hub has indicated six focus areas that are expected to undergo the greatest change. These focus areas are summarized below:

- Focus Area A – James Street North from the GO Station to the waterfront;
- Focus Area B – Strachan Street Green Corridor;
- Focus Area C – Station Area;
- Focus Area D – James Street North from Cannon Street to the GO Station;
- Focus Area E – Barton Street West; and,
- Focus Area F – Bay Street.

The Study provides key directions to guide future development for each of the focus areas and identifies a number of opportunity sites that serve as demonstrations on how to implement the key directions of the focus areas and achieve the recommended density targets.

Overall, the Study generally recommends appropriate intensification in the form of mid-rise (six to eight storeys) built form within the Mobility Hub with taller buildings (up to 12 storeys) located in Focus Area D - James Street North from Cannon Street to the GO Station. Additionally, the Study identifies a number of implementation recommendations that would provide for placemaking within the Mobility Hub, these include Recommendation #5, #8, #14, #10 and #16.

Successful Implementation

The Study's Implementation Strategy and Phasing Recommendations will ensure the successful implementation of the key directions of the Study. Recommendation #19 of the Study requires the monitoring of the implementation of the Study in order to understand the success of implementation and progress towards targets. This may include tracking of new development, improvements to the trails network, supply of affordable housing units, parking management and supply, new commercial or office space and success of pilot projects among other indicators.

Heights:

Throughout the process there was a lot of discussion on heights and appropriate locations for increased heights within the Study area. Through consultation with the public and a thorough analysis by the project consultant it was clear that building heights along James Street North from Cannon Street to the GO Station (Focus Area C and D) should be mid-rise in height (maximum eight storeys) so that heights are consistent with the street-wall that exists today. In addition, the Study determined that it was not appropriate to increase heights along James Street North to exceed eight storeys due to the existing property fabric of small lot sizes (depth and width) in this area and the low rise context that exists today. Maintaining a consistent built form and massing in this area will help to create a well-defined and sensitive transition between the street and adjacent stable neighbourhoods.

In the area from James Street North to the Waterfront (from the rail corridor north to Guise Street), the study determined that building heights in this area should be mid-rise in scale (no taller than the width of the street right-of-way). As the maximum R.O.W in this area is 20 m, the maximum height would be six storeys. In order to maintain the street-wall, all new buildings in this area must achieve a minimum three storeys at the street frontage. Not all sites in this area will be able to achieve the maximum height as some properties are physical constrained. The properties fronting Barton Street from Wellington Street North in the east to Queen Street North in the south (Focus Area E) were recommended as being mid-rise in height as well. For the area on Bay Street from Cannon Street to Strachan Street (Focus Area F), the study recommended increasing heights from five to six storeys, and maintaining a podium along the street frontage.

If proposals arise that request increases in height in the mobility hub area, the Study provides criteria for taller buildings that will ensure the vision and guiding principles are achieved and the surrounding stable residential neighbourhoods are protected.

Next Steps:

Overall, the Study evaluates and assesses the Mobility Hub against the applicable policies and guidelines, and gains input obtained from the public, stakeholder groups, and technical advisory groups, in order to provide an Implementation Strategy and Phasing Recommendations that will ensure the James Street North Mobility Hub is successful. Recommendation (b) directs Planning staff to report back on the Implementation Strategy and Phasing Recommendations contained within the *James Street North Mobility Hub Study*, which will ensure that the actions identified have been addressed to ensure the James Street North Mobility Hub is successful. The Study contains a vision and guiding principles that will serve as the reference for the planning and development of the mobility hub and should serve as the starting point for the Implementation Strategy and Phasing Recommendations contained within the Study.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

The James Street North Mobility Hub Study provides analysis and justification for the recommended implementation items. Recommendation (b) of this Report directs Planning Staff to report back on the Implementation Strategy and Phasing Recommendations which may include alternatives for consideration.

Alternative #1: Adopt the James Street North Mobility Hub Study Report which will allow the City to respond appropriately to the new GO Station development by having a framework in place that provides guidance to better connect the new James Street North GO Station and the community, including developing vacant or under-utilized lands in a contextually appropriate manner, creating a strong public realm and balancing transportation modes.

Alternative #2: Not adopt, or adopt in part, the James Street North Mobility Hub Study Report. This alternative will impede the City's ability to respond appropriately to the new GO Station development due to the lack of a comprehensive framework and implementation plan to guide development within the area.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

- Appendix "A": Mobility Hub Area Map
- Appendix "B": James Street North Mobility Hub Study Report